

Response ID ANON-BU5M-PRMA-9

Submitted to Home Buying and Selling Reform
Submitted on 2025-12-05 08:24:33

Introduction

About you

1 Are you responding as an individual or organisation?

Organisation

2 If responding as an individual - what is your name? (put N/A if responding as organisation)

Name:

N/A

3 If responding on behalf of an organisation - what is the name of your organisation and what is your role? (put N/A if responding as individual)

Organisation Name and Role:

British Geological Survey
Policy Director

4 What type of organisation are you responding on behalf of?

Other

If other, explain here:

The British Geological Survey (BGS) is the UK's principal provider of geoscientific data and expertise to government, industry, and the public. As part of UK Research and Innovation (UKRI; a non-departmental public body of the Government), BGS delivers impartial assessments of subsurface conditions, geological hazards, and environmental risks. With respect to the consultation, our capabilities include geological mapping and modelling, and site-specific hazard evaluation to support planning and infrastructure development.

Objectives for home buying and selling reform

5 Do you agree with the proposed objectives for reforming the home buying and selling system?

Proposed Objective Agreement:

N/A

6 Are there any objectives you think should be changed, removed, or added?

Proposed Objective Changes:

N/A

Ongoing work

Requiring upfront property information

7 Do you agree that there should be a mandatory requirement for sellers and estate agents to provide comprehensive upfront information?

Mandatory requirement:

N/A

8 Do you agree that this should include a requirement to order property searches and undertake a property condition report?

Search and condition report:

We agree that property searches and a property condition report are important, and we would like to highlight that, in addition to assessing the physical state of a property, these reports should also include an evaluation of the geological and ground conditions.

Such an assessment would help identify geological risks that could affect the property now and in the future, including those that may arise from changing climatic conditions. Key considerations should include the risk of subsidence and landslides, radon exposure, mining hazards, and groundwater

flooding.

Including geological and ground condition assessments at this stage is essential to ensure that appropriate mitigation and adaptation measures are considered for both current and future climate scenarios. This will enable buyers to make fully informed decisions.

It would also be beneficial to establish a minimum standard for these reports, ensuring that sellers provide information on relevant ground conditions as part of the property transaction is important that geological conditions/ ground conditions are considered at this point to ensure that the right mitigation and adaption, for both current and climate change conditions are considered to enable buyers to make informed decisions. Ground conditions which be considered could include subsidence and landslides, mining hazards, radon risk and groundwater flooding. It would be good to see a minimum standard of report that the seller must buy to ensure relevant ground conditions are considered.

9 What steps should government take to ensure that conveyancing lawyers, estate agents and surveyors have the capacity and capability to implement this change?

Government steps:

N/A

10 What resources and additional training would be needed in order to implement these changes?

resources and training:

N/A

Professionalising property agents

11 Do you agree that we should intervene to drive up standards amongst, and improve trust in, property agents?

government estate agent regulation:

N/A

12 Do you agree with our proposal to bring forward a Code of Practice on a non-statutory basis, and to legislate to put this on a statutory footing in future if necessary?

code of practice:

N/A

13 Do you agree with our proposal to consult on mandatory qualifications for estate and lettings agents?

mandatory qualifications:

N/A

14 Are there additional interventions you think government should take to drive up standards amongst property agents?

additional interventions:

N/A

15 Are there any other areas across the property agent sector that needs to be monitored or regulated in order to improve the customer journey?

other sectors to regulate:

N/A

Digital property logbooks and packs

16 Do you agree that government should aim to support the wider use of digital property logbooks and packs?

government support of logbooks:

N/A

17 If yes, what do you think would drive their wider adoption? How could government support this and do you think that legislation might be needed to bring about this change?

wider adoption:

N/A

18 What risks would need to be considered when creating and storing digital logbooks?

logbooks risk:

N/A

Binding conditional contracts

19 Do you agree that government should support mechanisms to make property transactions more binding at an earlier stage?

binding transactions:

N/A

20 What do you think is the most effective means of doing this – incentivise estate agents to offer this as a service; raise consumer awareness of binding agreements; legislate to require their use in property transactions etcetera?

binding contracts implementation:

N/A

21 What would be appropriate costs or penalties for failure to comply with binding contracts?

binding contract penalty:

N/A

22 Would there be any listed exceptions, or certain situations, for binding contracts not being applied?

binding contract exceptions:

N/A

Increasing consumer education and transparency

23 Do you agree that publishing information on the services of property professionals would improve home buying and selling by supporting consumer choice and driving competition?

Publishing professional info:

N/A

24 What information would you want to see included in a service of this type?

Service info type:

N/A

25 Do you think a charter as set out above would be useful in supporting consumers to identify quality property professional services?

charter:

N/A

Streamlining transactions

26 Do you agree that AML checks should be streamlined?

anti money laundering:

N/A

27 How can government most effectively support the application of AI conveyancing technology?

AI conveyancing:

N/A

28 What else do you think government should do to streamline the conveyancing process?

streamline conveyancing:

N/A

Next steps for digitalisation

29 Do you agree that this is the correct direction of travel?

digitalisation approach:

N/A

30 Is there anything else that government should be doing to promote digitalisation of the property sector?

promoting digitalisation further:

N/A

Leasehold Sales Information

Impact of Proposals